



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 29, 2012

2012-105

Contact: Julie Hasquet, Press Secretary

(907) 258-9304 office

(907) 350-4846 cell

Begich Praises Student Loan Agreement ***Legislative package also includes transportation bill passage***

U.S. Sen. Mark Begich today released the following statement after the Senate passed an agreement to prevent interest rates from doubling for over seven million college students. The bill will now go to the President for his signature.

This agreement was included as part of a larger package of legislation which also reauthorizes federal transportation programs and the national flood insurance program.

Without this legislation, the interest rate on new subsidized Stafford Loans for undergraduate students would have doubled, from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent on July 1, costing students an additional \$1,000 on average over the life of their loans.

Sen. Begich's statement:

"As the economy continues to recover, we couldn't ask our students to pay an additional \$1,000 on their loans, and we found a way to do that without increasing the federal budget deficit.

"I have been working for months to make sure these interest rates didn't double, which helps our students and our economy. As the former chair of the Alaska Student Loan Corporation, I know affordable education makes a world of difference for students and families. Once these students graduate, we want them to buy a home and build the economy, and not be saddled down by debt.

"I am glad Congress got this done before the deadline, and I was proud to support this entire package, which will also support millions of jobs building our transportation infrastructure for the future.

For details of the Alaska provisions in the surface transportation bill:

<http://begich.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=3dfe131a-4346-4cac-a45e-2c53ab827494>

###